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Summary provided for the doctoral procedure

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*TRANSFER OF TRAINING – A SUGGESTED COURSE
OF ACTION FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES
COPING WITH ACUTE FINANCIAL DISTRESS
AND ONGOING WORKFORCE CUT OFF
AN ISRAELI CASE STUDY*

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ABSTRACT

Local authorities in many free market economy – based countries as well as welfare economy - based countries, experience acute fiscal distress and ongoing cut- offs in the workforce. For years, many of the local authorities in Israel have been coping with ongoing acute fiscal distress, which has had a significant impact on their capability to create, sustain and deliver public value to their residents.

This dissertation aimed to provide suggested potential remedies for improving local authorities' and other organizations' performance. The suggested course of action was to leverage training and its transfer to work settings, although it was clearly noted that training and its successful application in the workplace are not a panacea to all the issues that the local authorities are confronting. An attempt was made to paint a picture of the key factors which may facilitate or prevent the use of training outcomes as a tool which can contribute to the abilities of an organization, acting in a turbulent environment, to accomplish its goals in the most efficient manner.

A total of 420 employees, participating in training courses, from three different sectors in various local authorities in Israel, were surveyed. However, due to missing data the usable sample was 272 trainees. Two employee - related constructs (trainee characteristics and motivation to improve work through learning - MTIWL) and two organization related constructs (work environment and training design) were captured for 272 trainees in an attempt to predict their impact on training transfer. Additionally, the impacts of trainee characteristics, work environment and training design on MTIWL were examined, along with the mediating role of MTIWL between the three above mentioned constructs and training transfer. The results partially supported the predicted links. Evidence for the impact of MTIWL on transfer of training was found while, in turn, rather surprisingly, the research findings revealed that trainee characteristics, work environment and training design had no influence on transfer of training. Additionally, trainee personal characteristics and work environment were found to be predictors of MTIWL. The respondents scored higher than average on all the variables, indicating above – average perceptions regarding the examined constructs. These were mapped as important factors in a work setting. The implications

of the results were discussed and several practical recommendations were made. Additionally, the limitations of this research were noted, along with suggested avenues for future research.

1. INTRODUCTION

Acute financial distress among local authorities is a well - known common worldwide phenomenon. For some years now, 253 local authorities in Israel have suffered from serious fiscal and financial distress, with many of them in dire economic straits. This acute distress was accompanied by ongoing wide-scale cut-offs in workforce. This situation conveyed to an inability to meet the community's needs and demands for high - quality public services.

Given the above mentioned reality, the research question posed was: How can the local authorities in Israel, which are fiscally - distressed and suffering from workforce cut offs, leverage workforce training and its application to the work setting in order to improve performance and meet the complex challenge of creating and delivering sustainable public value?.

While training and its succesful application to the workplace are not a panacea to scarce resources, faulty management and economic downturn, research in training and particular in its application to the workplace, plays a large role in solving numerous issues. In today's Information Age, the development

of the human asset through training is as critical to business activity as raw materials were during the Industrial Age.

The academical aims of this research are:

a.To paint a picture of the key factors which may facilitate or prevent the use of training outcomes as a tool which can contribute to an organization's abilities to accomplish its goals in the most efficient manner, as it continues to function in a dynamic environment and suffers from an ongoing shortage of tangible assets.

b.To conduct a holistic empirical study embedding the key factors (variables) which may lead to a higher quality of employee services and the correlations between them, in order to find a response to the problems that can be improved by training.

The practical aims of the research are:

a.Action which could aid their ability to create, deliver and sustain distinctive public value to their residents.

b.Considering that local authorities in many countries experience financial distress and ongoing cutt offs in

workforce, the research conclusions and recommendations could be helpful to other organizations and local authorities functioning in similar working patterns and under similar constraints.

c.To provide local authorities with a "toolbox" which could enable them to focus their training investments on transfer affecting factors that are within their sphere of control and feature a high cost – value ratio.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AT A GLANCE

This study is based on the researcher's conception that, in a work setting, two distinct expectations exist: individual and organizational. Individuals aspire to maximize personal goals, such as income, satisfaction and status, while organizations seek to employ individuals who are capable of contributing to achieving organizational goals and to optimizing organizations' competitive edge. These aspirations meet at several planes, such as acceptance examinations, job interviews and training provided by the organization. Within the interfacing processes, particularly during a training course, a fusion process occurs, whereby

the individual increasingly identifies himself with the organizational goals and feels responsibility as he begins to realize that doing so comes in tandem with fulfilling personal goals. On the other hand, the organization identifies itself with the individual who attends training and gradually becomes "part of the family" and more committed to the organization. This melding process is expedited by the training transfer. The researcher posits that the main factors facilitating the contribution of training transfer to that process are brought to the "melting pot" by both the individual and the organization: trainee characteristics and motivation on one hand and training design and work environment on the other. Based on this comprehensive perception, the theoretical background review attempts to discuss the main factors in person (individual characteristics, motivation) and organization (training design, work environment) that influence transfer of the learned in training to job performance.

2.1 Preface

As a direct result of the transition from the Industrial Age to the Knowledge Age (Ducker, 1959), the human resource has become the organization's most important asset. An understanding of the changing nature of work and the key role of human resources is increasing for countries and organizations to move towards the development of their knowledge based economies. The rationale behind such a shift is an understanding that people and their intellectual capital can play a crucial role in an economy in which these intangible assets are becoming important for economical growth and development. Drucker (1999 b, 79) emphasizes that " the most valuable asset of a 20th company was its production equipment. The most valuable asset of a 21st century institution (whether business or non – business) will be its knowledge workers and their productivity". Bates, et al., (2007), suggest that due to the complexity and changing nature of work, organizations have realized that highly skilled workers are essential in order to obtain a

competitive advantage and that training has become a critical practice in HRM.

However, large investments in training are not all that is required in order to improve organizational performance and produce business results. Training that does not contribute to advances in conduct, ability, skills and employee performance does not accomplish its goals (Burke & Baldwin, 1999; Schletter, 2003). Scholars estimate that that only 10% of the billions of dollars invested each year on training activities is translated into tangible values and transferred to job performance (Holton and Baldwin, 2000; Awoniyi et al., 2002

The training transfer process is defined by the researcher as the effective and continuous implementation of knowledge, skills and abilities, obtained in training, in work settings that lead to leveraging individual and organizational performance and productivity.

Transfer of training is a crucial output of organization's human asset development process. Working under the assumption that training indeed makes a difference,

organizations should identify training needs and create appropriate tools to obtain maximal transfer. Furthermore, organizations must carefully identify, map and nurture the factors that influence the transfer of skills, behaviour, abilities and knowledge obtained during training.

2.2 Training design

The researcher defines training design as an entire process of analysis of trainee and the organizations needs and goals, and the development of content and delivery systems to meet those needs and goals.

Numerous scholars opine that suitable preparation tailored to the content and instruction methods can enable trainees to learn and to transfer training into the workplace (Belling et al., 2004; Holton, 2003).

The design of the training to increase willingness to learn enhances transfer motivation (Kirwan & Birchall, 2006, Devos et al., 2007; Bates & Holton, 2004). However, Naquin and Holton (2003 a), opine that effectiveness of training is not solely based on learning content and the

quality of the methods used, but on the trainee's ability, motivation and environment as well.

2.3 Work environment

Work environment is defined as:

- a. A large spectrum of organizational factors that limit or empower the implementation of the material learned (Mathieu et al., 1992).
- b. Situations and consequences that encourage or prevent the transfer of the learned in training process to the workplace (Roullier & Goldstein, 1993);

Kontoghiorghes (2002), mapped the primary dimensions of the work environment: supervisory and peer support for new skills and knowledge, task cues, career utility, training accountability, opportunity to practice, use of new skills and knowledge in workplace, and intrinsic and extrinsic rewards.

Conclusions from a number of studies conducted indicated that:

- Peer support (Belling et al., 2004; Hawley & Barnard, 2005; Taylor, 2000) and supervisory support (Xiao, 1996; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Kontoghiorghes, 2001; Russ – Eft, 2002; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Liebermann & Hoffman, 2008) have a significant effect on training transfer. However, Awoniyi, et al., (2002), did not find any effect supervisory support has on transfer. Nijman et al., (2006), note the remarkable finding that a significant negative relationship exists between supervisor support and transfer of training.

- Career utility is the perceived role that training plays in achieving career goals, such as a raise in salary, promotion or a new interesting job. Results of Cheng's (2000), research indicate that there is a positive correlation between career and job utility and the transfer of training.

- Training accountability is the degree to which the organization expects the trainees to implement the knowledge and skills during their job and holds them responsible to do so (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Kontoghiorghes, 2002). Such an expectation sends a

clear and significant signal that the organization perceives training transfer as an important process to the organization.

- The opportunity to apply and practice what has been learned in training was rated as the highest supportive factor contributing to the training transfer process (Lim & Johnson, 2002). Furthermore, it impacts the motivation to implement the training (Bates & Holton, 2004; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006).

A number of studies assessed the relationship between the work environment and motivation to learn and motivation to transfer (Cheng & Ho, 2001a; Seyler et al., 1998; Cheng, 2000; Orpen, 1999). Some of the research mentioned by Cheng & Ho (2001a), indicate the existence of a strong positive correlation between supervisory or peer support and motivation while others do not find this relationship. Results of research conducted by Seyler et al., (1998), indicated a strong positive correlation between opportunities provided to use and practice new skills and knowledge, supervisory and coworker support and transfer motivation.

2.4 Trainee characteristics

The researcher defines personal characteristics as a dynamic and organized set of inherited individual traits that may facilitate or prevent the achievement of training goals. The main traits are personality, locus of control, self – efficacy, organizational commitment, career commitment, job involvement and self – esteem.

While the personality of the trainee was identified as an important factor determining the transfer of training process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988), other scholars have argued that, although it does play a role in the transfer of learning, it has little impact on transfer (Noe, 1986; Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Rowold (2007), showed that the five dimensions of FFM influence the motivation to transfer training.

Locus of control (LOC) refers to the extent to which an individual believes that the outcomes of his actions are determined by himself (internal locus of control) or alternatively are generated by uncontrollable external forces (external locus of control). Tziner et al., (1991),

determined that trainees with an internal locus of control transferred that learned at higher levels. Colquitt, et al., (2000), report that those with an internal locus of control were more motivated to learn, and that external locus of control moderately related to the transfer of training.

Self-efficacy is defined as the belief of one's capability to perform courses of action in a specific manner in order to attain defined goals and produce given results (Bandura, 1997; Omrod, 2006). Many researchers found self-efficacy to be positively related to training transfer (Holladay & Quinones 2003; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Stevens & Gist, 1997; Ford et al., 1998). It is well established that self-efficacy enhances learning outcomes, organizational commitment, motivation and performance (Salas & Canon – Bowers, 2001).

Organizational commitment (OC) is the multi-dimensional attitudes and behaviors that represent the relationship between employees and the organization. Kontoghiorghes (2002, 2004), shows that organizational commitment is strongly associated with transfer motivation. The researcher opines that organizational

commitment is one of the major determinants of organizational effectiveness and has a crucial role in generating responsibility that, by implementing learned SKAs to work settings, should be translated to peak performance.

Career commitment (CC), is defined as: a. Individual motivation to work in a chosen vocation (Hall, 1971); b. Individual's attitudes towards his vocation and profession (Blau, 1988). Research conducted by Mrayyan & Al Faouri (2008), among 640 nurses employed in 24 hospitals in Jordan revealed the presence of a significant and positive relationship between career commitment and job performance.

Job involvement is defined as the individual's psychological identification with his present job (Kanungo, 1982). This is a byproduct of the relationship between an individual's work and his self-concept. Job involvement is an individual attitude that maximizes effectiveness in work.

Self-esteem is a psychological concept encapsulating an individual's overall perception, evaluation and appraisal of self-worth; essentially measuring the extent to which an individual values himself. Relatively few studies on the effect of self - esteem on performance quality have been conducted and this leads the researcher to suspect that the results are not unequivocal. While Wallace and Baumeister (2002) and Baumeister et al. (1993), find that there was no effect of self - esteem on performance, Campbell & Fairey (1985), find that people with high self – esteem perform better than those with low self – esteem. The researcher opines that in situations in which a possible failure is salient, higher self - esteem may have an effect on performance.

Several researches examine the existence of a correlation between personal characteristics and the motivation to learn or motivation to transfer. In two studies cited by Cheng & Ho (2001 a), a strong positive correlation between aspiration to self-efficiency and motivation to learn was found. In three other studies, a strong positive correlation was found between aspiration to self-efficiency

and transfer of training. Six other studies failed to determine the existence of a correlation between aspiration to self-efficiency and transfer of training. Only one study found a strong positive correlation between work locus of control and transfer of training. Research results conducted by Seyler et al. (1998), identify the interrelation between personal characteristics, organizational commitment and transfer of training.

Naquin & Holton III (2002), were the principal researchers who investigated the interrelation between personal characteristics and motivation to learn. They recommended that organizations must concentrate more on the personal characteristics of employees in effort to maximize readiness to learn and to transfer.

2.5 Motivation and motivation in work

The researcher defines human motivation as a stimulus deriving from a combination of four basic independent emotional drives and needs by which people are guided by: the drive to obtain, to pertain, to satisfy curiosity and to protect against external threats.

In a training context, motivation is an integral aspect of training and a central predictor of its transfer. The time, money and resources an organization allocates to ways of increasing an employee's abilities are wasted to the extent that an employee chooses not to learn what is being thought or not to apply acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace. Hence, the purpose of leveraging performance is to focus not only in identifying the requisite abilities an individual requires to be more effective, it is also to coach the person so as to inculcate a desire of continuous improvement. Motivation is a force that energizes enthusiasm about the training program, a directing stimulus that guides the trainees to learn and attempt to apply the learned in a work setting even in situations in which there is lack of reinforcement for use of the training content (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Motivation can affect not only the achievement of individuals' skills and abilities but also how and to which extent they use their skills and abilities (Locke & Latham, 2004).

An understanding of motivation theories may help organizations to leverage employee performance.

Employees generally fall into two types: self-motivated, and those that require external motivation to stay motivated. Self-motivated employees tend to exhibit good performance even if they are never provided with much external motivation, but their performance increases when provided with that motivation. Employees that do require external motivation certainly improve performance quality when motivated skillfully.

Despite the interest in the content of motivation, no overall accepted approach to motivation exists. Nevertheless, a cursory view of the literature indicates that motivation theories may be grouped in two general categories: content theories (need) theories and process (cognitive) theories. Content theories of motivation focus on the assumption that people share a similar set of human needs which they are motivated to satisfy. In general, such theories regard motivation as the product of internal drives that direct a person to act or move toward the satisfaction of his needs. Process theories are centered on the rational cognitive process and state that while most people may have similar needs, their importance differs from one person to another.

In general, such theories are concerned with determining how individual behavior is energized, directed and maintained in the self – directed human cognitive processes.

Motivation at work is defined as "a set of energetic forces that originate both within as well as beyond an individual's being, to initiate work – related behavior, and to determine its form, direction, intensity and duration" (Pinder, 2008, 11).

According to Drucker (1969), knowledge has become a central factor of production in the advanced industrial economy modern economy. In most countries, knowledge work has been recognized as a key sector of the modern economy. The most valuable asset of the present century organization will be its knowledge workers and their productivity. Along with the transition to the knowledge economy; knowledge workers are gaining an increasingly crucial role. Drucker (1993), who coined the term "knowledge worker", observes that we are entering a "knowledge society" where the basic resources are no longer capital, labor or natural resources but is and will be knowledge in which knowledge workers will play a central

role. The nature of knowledge work requires continual growth, in terms of skill development. Motivated workers, by dint of their being more creative and productive, are a crucial factor in organization's survival and ability to compete. Knowledge workers must become interested in obtaining new information, memorizing it and desiring to incorporate the new obtained SKAs into work. A key consequence of this trend is the realization of knowledge as a primary source of wealth and competitive advantage. The goal is to make productive the specific strengths and knowledge of each individual. (Drucker, 1999 a, 22) asserts that "the starting point of the task both in theory and practice may have to be managing for the performance and not managing the people". The challenge is how organizations can increase the effectiveness of their training strategies as to be able to maximize the productivity of knowledge workforce. The main concern of management in the 21st century is to leverage the knowledge worker motivation and productivity. Motivation and productivity are twin concepts in organizational development with three connections. First, motivation works as the energizer towards productivity; second, motivation is the best cause to

reach productivity as a favorable effect and lastly, motivation is the trigger to productivity as a response. People need motivation just as pieces of equipment need fuel and operators.

As many theories of motivation exist, the question is: how can they be integrated and implemented at the workplace?. Managers must understand what motivates employees and take the necessary steps to assure and maintain high employee motivation. We rely on the established spectrum of theories in measuring observable manifestations of work motivation. For this reason, understanding the traditional motivational theories is important. Employees with low motivation are characterized by low levels of satisfaction, organizational commitment and responsibility that lead to low performance whilst employees with high levels of commitment, satisfaction and responsibility contribute to the financial performance of a company.

To summarize, so long there is freewill, it is obvious that any theory of motivation will work for all people. Despite the perception that realization of motivation theories in

real life is challenging and a hard mission to accomplish, the researcher opines that if managers are seeking to motivate their employees, then the best approach seems to be the use all of the theories in the contexts for which they seem best suited. Perhaps the main practical application of motivation theories is that it may serve the purpose to understand and think constructively about what activities and circumstances motivate employees who possess different backgrounds. Effective motivation at work is achieved by identifying each employee's motivation levels. After mapping the motivation levels, the required course of action should be chosen. Managers must identify personal needs of each employee and find ways to meet them. Gegenfurtner et al., (2009 b), indicate that training failures and the low ROI, created by the lack of employee motivation, are the major concerns of human resource development theory and practice. In this context, the researcher wishes to note that little empirical research was conducted to examine how motivation influences training transfer and task performance. Furthermore, most of research areas examined either motivation or outcome

factors as performance, without studying the link between these constructs.

Some scholars argue that extrinsic (pay and promotion) and intrinsic (self - esteem, sense of accomplishment, feeling of development of special talents) motivation factors have an impact on transfer of training (Rouiller & Goldstein 1993; Santos & Stuart, 2003; Taylor et al., 2005). Others emphasize that intrinsic motivation factors have greater influence on transfer of training (Kontoghiorghes 2001). However, Taylor et al. (2005), assert that the extrinsic components have more influence on transfer outcomes. Vroom (1964), contends that from the view of the cognitive approach of motivation, an individual chooses and acts based on behavioral patterns affected by various factors. Understanding these factors, especially those that affect the motivation to transfer the training, provide organizations with shaping techniques and methods to strengthen and increase motivation among the employees. He further avers that employees will be motivated to participate in training once convinced that these efforts will result in new skills, which in turn will

place desired results closer at reach. Some models of motivation to learn and motivation to transfer were investigated empirically, although their results were not consistent and the researchers recommended further research.

Noe (1986), is the pioneer of the literature dealing with motivational factors regarding training transfer. In his article, He shaped a model based on factors including behavior, approaches, qualities and trainee characteristics that might affect transfer of training and assumed that some personal characteristics, when integrated with organizational factors, might contribute to achieve expected results from training. He posited that Self-efficacy, expectations, the need for self-development and job-related factors affect the motivation to learn.

Researchers have pinpointed personality, relevance of training to the job, trainees' expectations from training, the need for self-development, job and career involvement, organizational commitment and supporting work environment as the main factors that affect motivation to

transfer (Seyler et al., 1988; Elengovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Cheng, 2000; Cheng & Ho, 2001 b; Kontoghiorghes, 2002). Others note career and organizational commitment, and commitment to quality as factors that affect motivation to learn (Cheng & Ho, 2001 b; Kontoghiorghes, 2002). Wlodkowski (1999), isolates four motivational conditions that strengthen motivation to learn: generalization, tendency, ability and signification. He argues that the personality of the trainee and the trainer, as well as their psychological background, have a significant contribution to the motivational climate to learn. People seek to learn if they have self-confidence and are convinced that their opinions are important to others. Wlodkowski mentions five instructor characteristics that instill motivation in trainees: familiarity with the training content, enthusiasm, involvement, clarity in instruction and cultural response.

Foxon (1993), states that motivation to learn (to train) and motivation to transfer are two different factors. Motivation to learn (pre-training motivation) is determined as the existing level of intensity and desire

prior to training. Numerous researchers have found that motivation to learn is a key factor impacting training effectiveness and transfer (Chiaburu & Marinova 2005; Noe, 1986., Fecteu, et al., 1995). Motivation to transfer is defined as a trainee's intended efforts to implement skills and knowledge obtained in training to a real work setting (Noe, 1986). Yelon et al., (2004), showed that motivation to transfer of training develops during the course of training. Axtell et al., (1997), find that motivation to transfer is a key predictor of positive training transfer. Kontoghiorghes (2002), concentrated on studying the influence of motivation to learn on motivation to transfer.

Naquin & Holton (2002), introduced a new construct: motivation to improve work through learning (MTIWL). They defined MTIWL as a process that integrates the will to participate in training, to learn and to transfer the obtained knowledge to improve his work. In a later study, MTIWL is defined by Naquin & Holton (2003 a, 87), as " the motivation to increase work outcomes by engaging in training or learning activities and using what is learned to

perform job functions differently". This is introduced in a study investigating the extent to which the Five-Factor Model of personality dimensions, affectivity and work commitment influenced MTIWL. Naquin & Holton (2002), stated that combined motivational influences are those that convey to expected training and learning outcomes. Naquin & Holton (2003 b), perceived MTIWL as a function of individual's motivation to learn / train, and motivation to transfer.

Results of their empirical research indicated affectivity, personality and organizational commitment as additional factors which influence MTIWL.

MTIWL is an important construct for organizations that aims to improve individual and organizational performance. To do so, organization should hire employees who are conscientious, agreeable, extroverts and have positive affectivity (McCloy & Wise, 2002). However, the researcher opines that organizations, stuck with unproductive employees, must identify situational factors (variables that are present at a given point in time but not on a permanent basis) that may assist in increasing

the current staff's motivation, in order to improve work through learning. McCloy & Wise (2002), demonstrated that MTIWL is related to dispositional influences and that companies aiming to improve motivation to learn must be aware of the relationship that exist between motivation, situational factors and dispositional influences.

Trainees with higher motivation will perceive learning as more important and shall strive to best implement the knowledge obtained in order to improve their performance (Bates & Holton, 1999).

3. THE RESEARCH IN SHORT

3.1 Hypotheses

Seven main hypotheses, followed by secondary ones, were placed for this study

Hypothesis 1 - Trainee characteristics will be positively related to motivation to improve work through learning.

Sub Hypotheses

- Self - esteem, self - efficacy, organizational commitment and work locus will be positively related to motivation to improve work through learning.
- Self - esteem, self - efficacy, organizational commitment and work locus of control will be positively related to the motivation to learn.
- Self - esteem, self - efficacy, organizational commitment and locus of control will be positively related to motivation to transfer.

Hypothesis 2 – Work environment will be positively related to motivation to improve work through learning.

- Perceived supervisory support, perceived peer support, perceived training accountability, perceived career utility and perceived opportunity to apply will be positively related to motivation to improve work through learning.
- Perceived supervisory support, perceived peer support, perceived training accountability, perceived career utility

and perceived opportunity to apply will be positively related to motivation to learn.

- Perceived supervisory support perceived peer support, perceived training accountability, perceived career utility and perceived opportunity to apply will be positively related to motivation to transfer.

Hypothesis 3 – Training design will be positively related to the motivation to improve work through learning.

- Instructional methods and training content will be positively related to motivation to improve work through learning.

- Instructional methods and training content will be positively related to motivation to learn.

- Instructional methods and training content will be positively related to motivation to transfer.

Hypothesis 4 – Trainee characteristics will be positively related to the transfer of training.

- Self - esteem, self - efficacy, organizational commitment and work locus of control will be positively related to transfer of training.

Hypothesis 5 – Work environment will be positively related to transfer of training.

- Perceived supervisory support, perceived peer support, perceived training accountability, perceived career utility and perceived opportunity to apply will be positively related to transfer of training.

Hypothesis 6 – Training design will be positively related to transfer of training.

- Instructional methods and training content will be positively related to transfer of training.

Hypothesis 7 – MTIWL will be positively related to transfer of training.

- Motivation to learn and motivation to transfer will be positively related to transfer of training.

3.3 Methodology

This dissertation is based on desk and field research. The desk research focused on research that examined the factors facilitating or preventing the training transfer processes. It revealed the lack of a holistic research in this field. The vast majority of the research concentrated on the relationship of one dimension with training transfer. The relationships between factors and their dimensions with training transfer were mostly discussed and very little examined.

The field research which is Descriptive-Quantitative, investigated the interrelations between variables.

A sample of 420 trainees, employees of local authorities (water supply and canalization engineers / inspectors, procurement officers and assistants to kindergarten principals) participating in training programs organized by The Training and Development Center was used. However, due to missing data the usable sample size was 272 (65% correct criterion level).

Data was collected from two sources for this research:

- Questionnaires (statements / questions)
- Interviews with managers in the local authorities who are in charge of relevant sectors. The interviews were conducted after the factor analysis and the collection of the findings.
- Frequency, relative frequency, accumulated frequency and accumulated relative frequency were calculated relating the demographic variables.
- Mean, minimum, maximum, mode, median, range, standard deviation (STDV), coefficient of variation and internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha coefficients) were calculated concerning the research variables and their dimensions.
- Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the independent variables (including their dimensions) and the dependent variable.
- Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the independent variables (including their dimensions) and the mediating variable (including its dimensions)

- Pearson's Correlation Coefficient was used to examine the relationship between the mediating variable (including its dimensions) and the dependent variable.

- The t-test was used to examine the differences (if existing) of the demographic variables relating each variable.

- Kolmogorov – Smirnov test (Z test) was used to examine the mediation extent of the mediating variable: motivation to improve work through learning.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The demographic data analysis indicated that:

- 58.46 % of the respondents or 159 were female and 41.54% or 113 were male.
- 44.49 % or 121 of the respondents were above 46 years old.
- The majority of the respondents had 5 to 10 years work experience (seniority).

- The majority of the respondents had education more than 12 years.

Respondents' mean scores (scale of 1to5) on research variables and their dimensions showed results as illustrated in the following table.

Variable / Dimension	Mean scores (all trainees)	Mean scores (engineers)	Mean scores (purchasing officials)	Mean scores (kindergarten assistants)
<i>Trainee characteristics</i>	<i>3.23</i>	<i>3.27</i>	<i>3.21</i>	<i>3.23</i>
Self-esteem	3.15			
Self-efficacy	3.18			
Organizational commitment	3.31			
Work locus of control	3.30			
<i>Work environment</i>	<i>3.57</i>	<i>3.45</i>	<i>3.33</i>	<i>3.79</i>
Perceived supervisory support	3.68			
Perceived peer support	3.52			
Perceived training accountability	3.57			
Perceived career utility	3.60			
Perceived opportunity to apply	3.33			
<i>Training design</i>	<i>3.48</i>	<i>3.49</i>	<i>3.38</i>	<i>3.53</i>
Instructional methods	3.49			
Training content	3.47			
<i>MTIWL</i>	<i>3.33</i>	<i>3.21</i>	<i>3.09</i>	<i>3.27</i>
Motivation to learn	3.43			
Motivation to transfer	3.18			
<i>Transfer of training</i>	<i>3.20</i>	<i>3.45</i>	<i>3.31</i>	<i>3.25</i>

The Pearson analysis indicated that:

- Significant high positive correlation between trainee characteristics (and its dimensions) and MTIWL (and its dimensions) was found:

The research hypothesis 1 was supported.

- Significant high positive correlation between work environment and MTIWL was found

The research hypothesis 2 was supported.

- No positive correlation between training design (and its dimensions) and MTIWL (and its dimensions) was found.

The research hypothesis 3 was not supported.

- No significant positive correlation between trainee characteristics (and its dimensions) and transfer of training was found .

The research hypothesis 4 was not supported.

- No significant positive correlation between work environment (and its dimensions) and transfer of training was found.

The research hypothesis 5 was not supported.

- No significant positive correlation between training design (and its dimensions) and transfer of training was found.

The research hypothesis 6 was not supported.

- Significant high positive correlation between MTIWL and transfer of training was found.

The research hypothesis 7 was supported.

Kolmogorov – Smirnov test (Z test) was used to examine the mediation extent of the mediating variable: motivation to improve work through learning.

The test indicated that the mediating variable was not significant between the independent variables and the dependent variable.

The t-test was used to examine the differences (if existing) of the demographic variables relating each variable. No differences were found with the exception of the following:

- Significant difference between perceptions of respondents with seniority up to 8 years and perceptions of those with seniority above 8 years regarding the trainee characteristics variable **was found.**
- Significant difference between perception of respondents up to 40 years old and perceptions of those above 40 years old regarding the trainee characteristics variable **was found.**
- Significant difference between male to female perceptions regarding the transfer of training variable **was found..**
- Significant difference between perceptions of respondents with seniority up to 8 years and perceptions of those with seniority above 8 years regarding the transfer of training variable **was found.**

- Significant difference between perceptions of respondents up to 40 years old and perception of those more than 40 years old regarding the transfer of training variable **was found.**

- Significant difference between perceptions of respondents with education up to 12 years and perceptions of those with education above 12 years regarding the transfer of training variable **was found.**

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are derived to answer the research question and are designated to the achievement of the research goals.

- *Motivation to improve work through learning* was scored by the respondents as being above average, a finding leading to the conclusion that they perceived this construct to be important in leveraging their performance. Moreover, the research results point to the impact of MTIWL on training transfer and the relationships with trainee characteristics and the work environment.

Based on these findings, the researcher opines that some recommendations should be made to increase employee motivation to improve performance by transferring new skills, abilities and knowledge to work settings.

While the presence of financial reward may not be a good motivator, its absence is a strong reducer of motivation. A systemic reality in Israel's local authorities is the low wages which are, at best, sufficient to live off. They are not competitive with the private sector and often not with other institutions in the public sector. Wages are too compressed, not reflecting the skills, training and seniority of management positions compared to low-paid jobs. Additionally, non-monetary compensation plays a major role in local authorities in Israel which are mostly realized after retirement. Furthermore, modification of the compensation structure implemented following training in the local authorities should be considered, by converting the present automatic compensation system based on hours of participation in training to one based on "personal contribution-based rewards". This would increase transfer and productivity. Since the researcher is well aware of the

problems that may occur in the implementation of this step in local authorities, it can be first implemented as an added bonus to automatic compensation already given relative for training hours. This would be a sign of appreciation for unique individual contribution to the organization.

- *Trainee characteristics* were found to influence MTIWL and were scored slightly above average. Based on those findings some recommendations should be made in order to enhance and leverage employee perceptions regarding this construct and its dimensions.

Since high level of self-efficacy helps with motivation, it is recommended that the local authorities need to concentrate on developing higher levels of self-efficacy among their employees. They can begin by gaining full appreciation of differences among employees such as achievement-orientation levels, personal values, and intrinsic motivators. Furthermore, they can incorporate situational approaches, the operant approach and empowerment, steps that may make a difference by changing the situation. With the operant approach, leaders can enhance the situation by giving clear directives and

expectations, providing effective consequences, assessing effective rewards and maintaining perceptual equality. Empowerment generates responsibility and a sense of accomplishment by providing individual perceived ownership, which in turn creates internal motivation to succeed. Lastly, effective communication and feedback can help employees to raise their self-image by letting them know that they have value, and motivating them to acquire new skills, abilities and knowledge in training. Such a belief that they are appreciated ultimately builds self-confidence. Providing positive feedback to the transfer of skills, knowledge and abilities builds situational self-efficacy.

The researcher posits that *organizational commitment* is a joint product of organizational culture and individual characteristics, and a predictor of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The researcher recommends that the local authorities should strengthen the organizational commitment of their employees by empowerment, autonomy, clear goal-setting and positive feedback to

improved performance. This would leverage the affective, continuance and normative commitments.

Self-esteem is required for motivation. The local authorities must leverage employees' self-esteem by emphasizing their value in the organization and their unique contribution to improving public services, and compensate them accordingly. The feeling among majority of the employees that they are not appreciated for improved performance results in low self-esteem and lower motivation.

The work environment was scored highest among the research variables. Several recommendations in its regard and dimensions should be made as the construct was perceived as the most important construct and found to have an impact on MTIWL.

Regarding *supervisory support*, the application of numerous motivation theories in training management of the local authorities may contribute to increased employee motivation and thus to leveraging their productivity. First, the application of goal-setting theory may increase a

supervisor's ability to design training objectives that meet employees' needs and provide clear explanations about the ways of achieving the goals. This may strongly increase employees' motivation to improve work through learning. Second, the application of Adam's (1965) Equity Theory in training management among the local authorities may lead to a situation in which employees who receive support and recognition from their supervisors, while attending and applying training, will perceive equity. Employees who feel that they are fairly treated and supported by their supervisors will invoke their motivation to learn, which, in turn, may lead to an increase in performance and productivity. Finally, application of Vroom's (1964) Expectancy Theory may contribute to the ability of a supervisor to open communications with his employees regarding the value of attending training and the need and importance of learning new competencies. He may thus increase employee motivation to improve work through learning and, as a result, lead to improved performance. Regarding peer support, the application of motivation theories in training management of the local authorities may contribute to increasing employee

motivation and thus to leveraging their productivity. Maslow (1943) viewed the need for love and belonging as a step toward achievement in his hierarchy of motivation model. In this view, the deprivation of more basic needs hinders progress along the path to achievement. According to this model, individuals must have issues of love and belonging satisfied in order to address needs of achievement. The ability to learn is built on a foundation of comfortable relationships with coworkers. The Expectancy Theory defines motivation as the product of the amount of success in a task that an individual expects to earn multiplied by the amount of value the individual places on the task. Thus, a task whose individual values and in which he expects to be successful will be motivating compared to a task with lower expected success or value. Whereas past experience can predict the expectancy aspect of this, the value placed on the task is mediated more by outside factors, such as peers. Numerous motivational theories include the incentive or rewarding aspects of motivation, which may also stem from relationships with others. If the local authorities can manage to create a work environment that strongly

encourages *peer support* for education and learning, then the individual will value learning because he is reinforced, or rewarded, for behavior that indicates learning is valued. Employees in peer groups, that do not value education, lack the stimulation and reinforcement needed to encourage personal learning.

Motivation to learn is directly related to the extent to which training participants believe that such participation will affect their job or *career utility*. In other words, if the body of knowledge gained can contribute to the work to be accomplished, then the acquisition of that knowledge will be a worthwhile event for the employee and employer.

The local authorities must emphasize strongly the role that personal development through learning plays in achieving personal goals such as promotion and to make serious steps to support and realize those declarations by promoting employees according to their contribution to the organization and not only according to their seniority. Furthermore, the local authorities must make it very clear that they expect their employees to implement that which they learned and signal that they hold them responsible to

do so. These expectations should be well known among the workers. This step may increase the degree of *training accountability* and, in turn, increase motivation to improve work through learning in order to meet the organizational expectations and thus to increase their possibilities of gaining higher status and compensation. Paying close attention to the *opportunity to apply* such by allocating more time and resources will heighten local authorities' employee motivation to practice their newly earned skills and hence improve workplace productivity. Additionally, if the body of skills, knowledge and abilities gained can be applied to the work to be accomplished, then the acquisition of that knowledge will be worthwhile for the employee and he will be motivated to learn.

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